City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 5, 2011

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 7 - STAFF UPDATES

ISSUE: Staff update to Commission on various ongoing projects

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the staff update.

A. TRANSITWAY CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Transportation Commission held a public hearing at its September 7 meeting related to the recommendation for Corridor C (Van Dorn / Beauregard). The Commission passed a motion accepting the High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group (CWG) recommendation, with two caveats: 1) that the transitway be optimized to better serve the Northern Virginia Community College, and 2) that the Transportation Commission be tasked to identify the decision criteria, evaluate, and monitor the transition from Alternative D (Bus Rapid Transit in dedicated lanes) to Alternative G (Streetcar in dedicated lanes), and periodically report the progress to the City Council. A public hearing was held by both the Planning Commission (on September 8, 2011), and City Council (on September 17, 2011). The City Council approved the recommendation as made by the CWG, and accepted the motions made by both the Transportation Commission and Planning Commission.

In addition, the study has been proceeding with analysis for Corridors A (Route 1/North-South), and B (Duke Street/Eisenhower Avenue). At its August 18 meeting focused on Corridor B, the CWG recommended that Duke Street be the roadway to be used for dedicated transit, and that Eisenhower Avenue be considered for additional improvements to existing transit, such as improved headways. The CWG recommended criteria to be used for preliminary screening of alignment concepts. The project consultant will be evaluating alignment concepts and will bring the results back to the CWG at its October 20 meeting.

At its September 15 meeting focused on Corridor A, a number of alignment options were presented to the CWG, including use of West Street, Route 1, and Washington Street. The project team is in the process of determining next steps for refinements to Corridor A concepts.

B. POTOMAC YARD METRO STATION UPDATE

The Potomac Yard Metro project is an infill Metrorail Station to be located between the current National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail Stations on the blue and yellow lines and be located in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

The next meeting of the Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Working Group (PYMIG) is scheduled for October 26, 2011 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Council Workroom in City Hall. The preliminary alternatives will be evaluated against the project goals and objectives as listed below to determine those alternatives that continue through the environmental process.

Project Goals	Project Objectives
Goal 1: Improve access to the regional Metrorail system	• Support WMATA's current system expansion plans for the Metrorail system • Support regional long-range transportation plans • Maximize access and minimize travel times for regional transit trips to and from existing and planned development in the Potomac Yard area
Goal 2: Serve population and employment growth in the Potomac Yard area	• Maximize accessibility of transit to existing and planned population and employment within the project study area • Support the City of Alexandria's redevelopment plans and transportation plans and policies for Potomac Yard and the U.S. Route 1 corridor
Goal 3: Accommodate projected travel demand and improve regional air quality	• Increase transit ridership to and from the Potomac Yard area • Increase overall transit mode share for trips in the Potomac Yard area • Reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled
Goal 4: Provide a cost-effective and financially feasible transportation investment	• Maximize ridership for existing transit infrastructure • Minimize capital and operating costs • Provide financially feasible transportation choices • Provide opportunities for private sector funding
Goal 5: Enhance transportation and pedestrian safety	• Minimize walking distances from station to residential/commercial development • Maximize direct connections with surface transit services and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities • Minimize potential for conflicts between pedestrians, transit users, and automobile traffic

Note: Consistency with Goal 4 regarding cost-effectiveness and financial feasibility was not considered as part of this screening criterion. The alternatives are not yet developed to a sufficient level of detail to assess their cost-effectiveness, and their financial feasibility is considered separately as a later step in the screening analysis

The next steps include finalizing the alternatives that will continue through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process and completion of the environmental analysis for the alternatives.

C. CRYSTAL CITY POTOMAC YARD TRANSITWAY

The City received a grant for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway totaling $8.5 million. The grant will be allocated to the design/build of the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transitway (BRT) between Monroe Avenue and Potomac Avenue in a dedicated transitway. The City Council approved the operation of a transitway in the median of Route 1 on June 16, 2007. In addition, the Council gave formal approval for the construction for this portion of the Crystal

City/Potomac Yard transitway (BRT) in April, 2011.

The selection of a consultant is underway with a request for proposals (RFP) from previously qualified firms due on September 30, 2011. A design/build firm will be selected and under contract in the Fall of 2011. The project will begin in Fall 2011 with construction completed in Winter 2013. To date, no funds from this grant have been spent.

Additionally, the City recently received a grant of $990,000 from the Department of Transportation for design and construction of the stations of the BRT. This additional funding is outside of the $8.5 million for the design and construction of the BRT transitway as noted above. The RFP for the station design will be completed in Winter, 2011 with design to begin in early 2012 and construction to follow after design is complete.